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THE JERUSALEM POST

PESSAH MAGAZINE



'We were slaves unto Pharaoh in Egypt' (See Index, page five)

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29, 1972

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# Wadi of the Pilgrims

Travellers crossing the Sinai peninsula for the past 2,000 years and probably more have stopped off at a spring in Wadi Haggaj, 160 kms. south-west of Eilat and rested in the shade of the sandstone cliffs. Beginning with the Nabateans, many have recorded their visits by making inscriptions in the soft stone. A Hebrew University archaeology team has studied graffiti from Jewish, Christian and Arab pilgrims as well as the Nabateans, writes The Post's **MALKA RABINOWITZ.**

OVER 400 rock inscriptions have been found by Israeli archaeologists since the Six Day War in a Sinai desert ravine called Wadi Haggaj (Ravine of the Pilgrims), located near a large spring about 160 kms. south-west of Eilat.

Hebrew University archaeologist Avraham Negev, who explored the area several months ago, says the earliest inscriptions are those of the Nabateans, a talented and literate tribe of Arab origin who penetrated Trans-Jordan some time in the 4th century B.C.E., established their capital at Petra, and continued on to the Negev to set up caravan stations at Awlat, Nitzana and other sites. Their history touches that of the Jews most closely in the person of King Herod the Great, whose mother was the daughter of a noble from Petra.

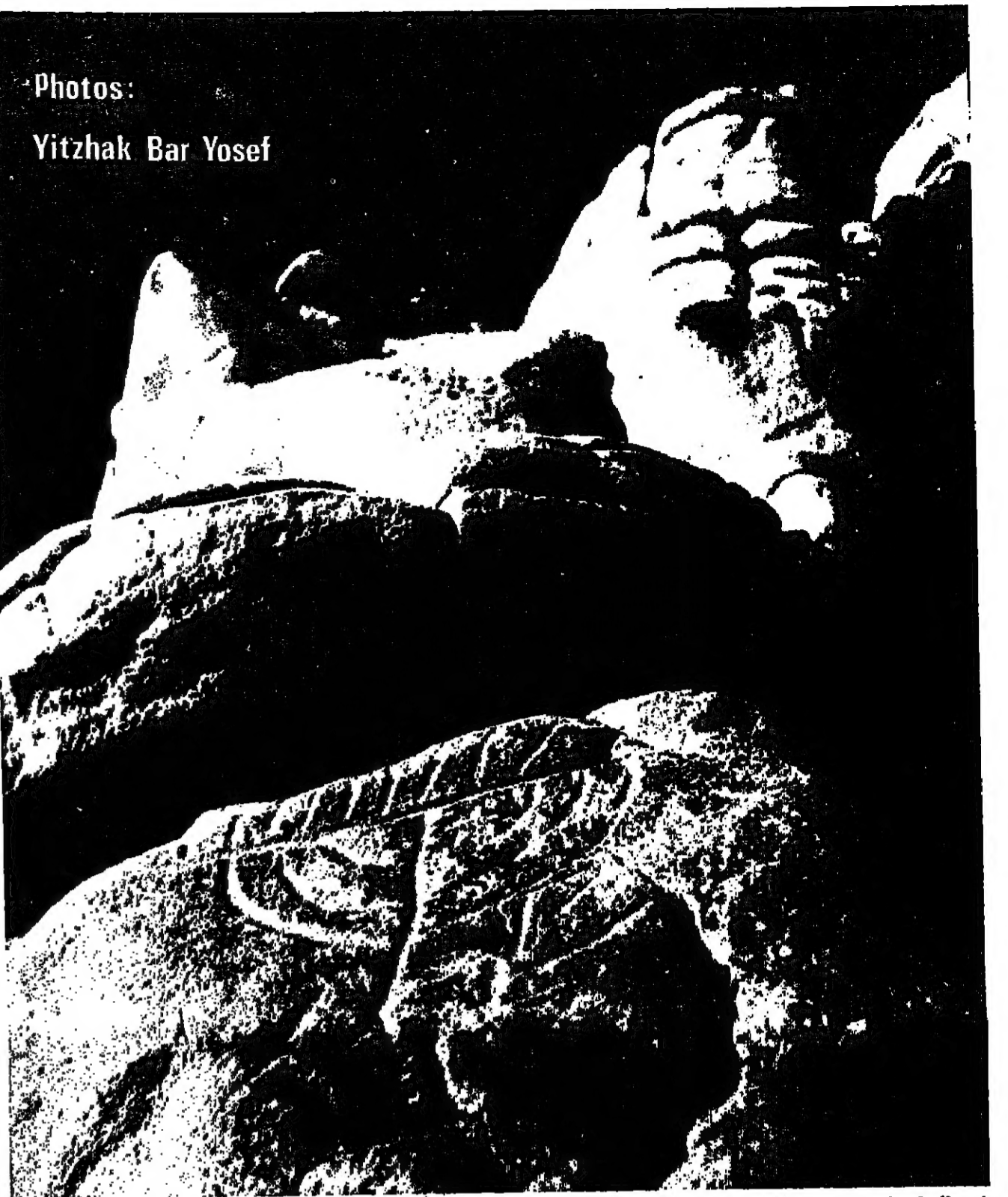
It now appears that Nabateans were travelling along the eastern coast of Sinai, through Wadi Haggaj, at least as early as the 2nd and 3rd centuries C.E. Their language, a dialect of Aramaic, is scratched into rocks along the gorge and, happily for the archaeologists, some of the inscriptions carry dates. In 106 C.E. the Nabatean kingdom was transformed into a Roman province and the dates follow the calendar of the ruling power.

Seeking to explain the Nabatean presence in the desert, Dr. Negev speculates that they may have reopened the ancient Egyptian copper and turquoise mines in southern Sinai on behalf of the Romans. Another theory is that they harvested the dates in the Firan oasis. Roman writers of the 1st century C.E. extol the quality of the dates exported to Italy from the palm groves of "Jericho, Ein Gedi and Sinai."

The Nabatean graffiti are simple formulae combined with names. Frequently used are the phrases *שלום* (*shalom* — peace) and *זכור לנו* (*zachor l'nav* — remember to the good). One group of names has turned up in widely separated places, indicating that the family involved — three brothers and their father — did a lot of travelling. They are given in varying orders (probably depending on who was doing the writing) as Algu, Abushu and Erlyin, sons of Harlahu.

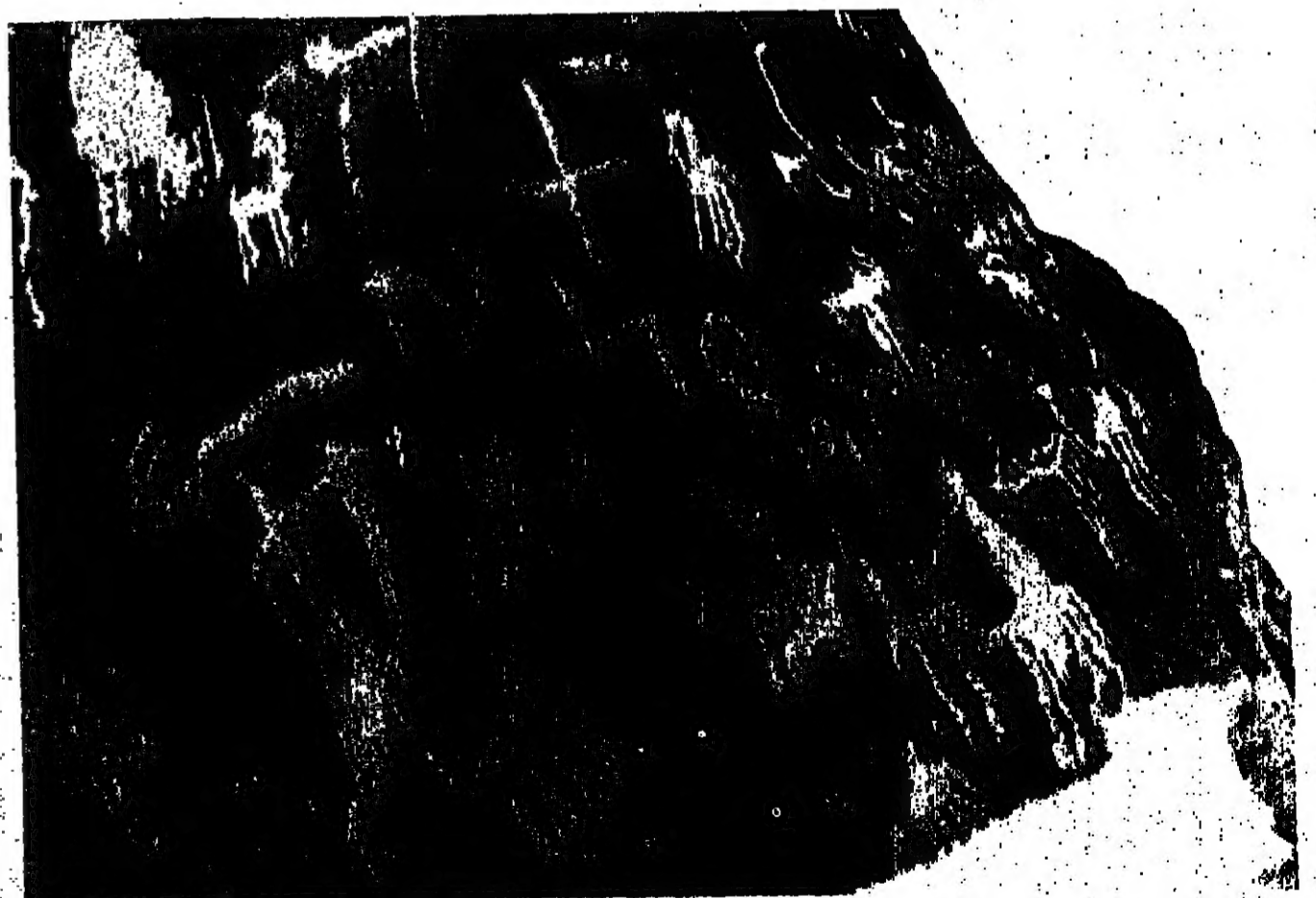
The date of Nabatean penetration into Sinai may now be pushed back a century following a discovery by one of Dr. Negev's assistants, Renata Rosenthal, on the field trip last December. Travellers in all periods had sought shade under the same rocks, and graffiti are scrawled near each other in Naba-

(Continued on page 4)



Photos:  
 Yitzhak Bar Yosef

A Jewish pilgrim carved this seven-branched candelabrum on a rock of Wadi Haggaj. The style is similar to menorah drawings found in synagogues of the sixth and seventh centuries.



These camels were drawn recently by Beduin in imitation of old drawings that are barely visible. The Beduin have taken note of the interest in rock drawings shown by visitors to Sinai.

# ENCOURAGING JEWISH PILGRIMAGES



Minister of Tourism **MOSHE KOL** has proposed the revival of the traditional *aliya l'regel*, by urging Jews to come to Israel at least once a year. He explains to **DAVID BEIT-RAN.**

THE tradition of Jewish pilgrimages to Jerusalem during one of the three *aliya l'regel* festivals is about to be revived if the Ministry of Tourism has its way. Tourism Minister Moshe Kol says his staff are already promoting the idea among Jews abroad of coming on a pilgrimage to Israel at least once a year.

"We want to develop this in such a way that delegations from every Jewish community in the world will make a point of coming at least once a year to demonstrate their solidarity and identification with the State," Mr. Kol said. Groups have already come on a community basis, and the Ministry is now devoting considerable efforts to turning this into a tradition among the Jews of the Diaspora.

## Not only money

"The bridge between Israel and the Diaspora should not only be a link of money, though donations are very important," said the Minister. "The Jewish congregations, through annual pilgrimages to Israel, should become the major cultural bridges between us. We are interested in having these pilgrimages split up among the three *aliya l'regel* festivals, so that accommodation can be provided for all. I have issued orders to the Tourism Offices abroad to promote this idea, and have high hopes that it will develop into the mass movement which we are seeking."

He spoke about this subject at the World Conference of Synagogues and Communities, a gathering of the Orthodox movement held here in January.

"The head of the United Synagogues of America, Mr. Jacob Stein, was here recently and I impressed him with the need to propagate the idea among the members of the Conservative movement in the U.S. We have also been in contact with the U.S. Reform movement, and as they are planning to move their headquarters to Israel, this too should help develop the idea."

such as a Bar Mitzva or a Silver Wedding anniversary in Israel. This practice has been growing in recent years, and we hope that this trend will continue."

"In the youth sphere," said Mr. Kol, "we think that holding summer camps not only helps to develop tourism, but also forms a bridge between the youth of the Diaspora and our own youth here. It's an injection of Jewishness. The problem is to help these youngsters make a more contact with *asra youth*. So far there hasn't been enough of this. The Diaspora youth want to meet their Israeli peers, and it would add a new dimension to Israel's experience."

About a quarter of the tourists who came last year were under 25 years of age. Mr. Kol explained that his Ministry's Youth and Student Department is doing a great deal to provide for these visitors, for example by encouraging their participation in archaeological digs.

"Many of the youngsters want to stay on kibbutzim, but the kibbutzim are already swamped with such requests and they simply can't accommodate everyone. This is why we have to find new programmes for youth. It is also to answer the need that we are expanding the size and number of camping sites around the country, as well as aiding in the expansion of the youth hostel network."

The Three Day March will also be held in 1973. In addition, we hope there will be an international piano competition under the patronage of Arthur Rubinstein, and the Ein Gev Music Festival will be another attraction to music lovers.

"Advance bookings for 1973 already show that even with the curtailment of the festivities, we can expect to have a bumper year. Many Jewish organizations have already decided to hold conventions and conferences in Israel next year, and altogether we expect that 1973 will give a big boost to Jewish tourism. I only hope that we will have enough hotel rooms ready to accommodate the influx," the Minister concluded.



"And we were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt..." This quotation from the Haggada, which will be read at the Seder service tonight, is the theme of the cover of this special Pesach Eve supplement. The cover is a reproduction of a wall fresco in the Tomb of the Nobles at Thebes, Egypt, from the 18th dynasty (about 1550 B.C.), about the time the Hebrews were slaves in Egypt. Photo by Tourneau, Paris.

## Pessah pilgrimages

Pessah and pilgrimage have been related since ancient times. Together with Succot and Shavuot, Pessah is a festival of *aliya l'regel*, when the faithful came to Jerusalem to worship at the Temple.

**THE WADI OF THE PILGRIMS** — Malka Eshkolovitz writes about some fascinating graffiti in Sinai's Wadi Hagga. Page 8.

**GOING UP TO JERUSALEM** — Prof. Pinhas Peli discusses the applicability of the mitzva of *aliya l'regel* today. Page 8.

**THE TEMPLE MOUNT** — The Hukka Gates, through which pilgrims entered the Temple, are the subject of a picture story on Prof. Benjamin Mazar's historic dig on the edge of the Temple Mount. Pages 8, 9.

**STORIES OF THE SEDER** — Prof. Pinhas Peli discusses the applicability of the mitzva of *aliya l'regel* today. Page 8.

**A BILU PESSAH** — Shoshana Halevi tells the story of the first Pessah in Jerusalem of the Bilo pioneers, who came to Eretz Israel on their own kind of pilgrimage about the turn of the century. Page 17.

**THE MOST ILLUSTRATED OF JEWISH BOOKS** — Michael Kandel talks about some interesting and historic Haggadot. Page 18.

**TORA AND FLORA** — By L. I. Rabinovitz. Page 20.

**HALACHA AND AGADA** — By Prof. Avraham Yehoshua Teitel. Page 21.

**SEDER IMPLEMENTS** — Picture story. Page 22.

## A SEDER FOR EVERY BUDGET Visitors to sit at tables in kibbutzim, hotels tonight

A FEW hundred tourists will be lucky enough to be guests at the Seder tables of kibbutzim or ordinary families around the country. The tables with paying content themselves for the special Seder for visitors being held in virtually all hotels.

The Ministry of Tourism has arranged with a number of kibbutzim to have tourists as Seder guests. The meal will be free for the visitor, who will only have to pay for the transport to the kibbutz which the Ministry is arranging.

The most expensive Seder meal in the country will be at the Diplomat Hotel in Jerusalem, where guests will be asked to pay IL22 each. Compared with this, the price being charged by the King David Hotel is only a modest IL20 plus service. Two of Tel Aviv's top hotels, the Hilton and the Sheraton, will be charging IL20 per head. Tourists with less expensive tastes are also being catered for and a Seder in one of the country's smaller hotels may cost as little as IL20.

holiday will be the week-long Ein Gev Music Festival opening on March 30. In addition to the Israel Philharmonic and the Israel Broadcasting Orchestra, it will have a special evening of spirituals sung by Odette, one of the world's greatest artists in this genre. Other evenings will feature dance by the Bat Sheva group, Army entertainment groups, kibbutz singers and dancers, and a Dutch pop group called "Ekspektion." Tickets for each performance cost between IL7 and IL12 and can be purchased at all Egged Tour offices, at the office of the Kinneret Sailing Company, or at Ein Gev itself.

In Tel Aviv, a special entertainment evening for tourists will be held on March 28 on the roof of the youth club in Old Jaffa. Tickets for this event cost IL10.

The Ministry of Tourism and the Jerusalem Municipality are arranging special walks through the Old City twice daily, at 8:30 p.m. each day of the holiday, except on Friday, March 31, when there will be only the morning walk. It is expected that these tours, for which there is no charge, will take between two and three hours.

## Ein Gev Festival

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Dr. Avraham Negev (right) and archaeology student Zvi Ben-Zvi copying inscriptions on a rock of Wadi Hagga in Sinai. These were scratched into the sandstone about two metres above ground level, apparently in an attempt to safeguard them from defacement.



Crosses inscribed by Christian pilgrims, probably before the Arab conquest in the seventh century, when pilgrimages through Sinai became more difficult.



The inscription on top mentions a woman called Nonna who may have been the daughter of the architect of St. Catherine's monastery in southern Sinai. The inscription reads: "Bless, O Lord, your servant Theodore, and Kassia, and Auxon, and Nonna, and Stefanos and John."

By this time, the Nabateans had probably merged with the Christian population. Some of their names appear with crosses alongside, as do Arabic names (written in Greek):

"Remember, O Lord, Mas'ud."

"O Lord, (protect) Kasatos, the son of Abdullah."

Pious Armenian travellers left behind writing whose alphabet can be made out but whose words have still not been deciphered, says Dr. Negev, who has turned over the inscriptions for study to an Armenian archaeology student from East Jerusalem, Anton Boytayan. These pilgrims came either from Armenia or from the already well-established Armenian community in Jerusalem.

The name of a fortress in southern Trans-Jordan is mentioned in two of the inscriptions, indicating that some of the pilgrim caravans had soldier escorts. One of them reads:

"Fortress of Zadaacata. O Lord, save your servants Sergius, son of Stephen, and the sison (a minor church official) Kyriakus, and Theodore, son of Sergius."

Zadaacata, on the road from Petra to Akaba, was built as a Roman garrison in the fourth century C.E. and continued in use down to the Arab conquest of 638.

Of the large number of Arabic Moslem names, the most recent were inscribed by soldiers of Nasser's pre-1967 troops in Sinai.

In modern times, western travellers penetrated Wadi Hagga about a century ago. Two of them otherwise unknown but writing in a neat hand, were "J. Mathias" and "F. Howett" who stopped near one of the rocks on May 8, 1887. Other modern

inscriptions are in Latin and Russian. The most recent, to Dr. Negev's regret, are those of Israeli who defaced some of the ancient inscriptions by carving in their own names.

Survival techniques in Wadi Hagga have not changed much since the Nabateans, says Dr. Negev. Visitors, including himself, still head for the shade cast by the sandstone rocks while Beduin guides lead camels down to the spring to bring back water supplies. Ain Khudera is the only large spring within a day's journey. Fragments of cooking pots left by centuries of pilgrims are strewn about the foot of the rocks.

A surprise came one day when Dr. Negev, scouting the area, spotted a cave through binoculars. It was a site likely to interest a colleague then searching for pre-historic remains in Sinai and Dr. Negev went over to investigate. Inside the cave he found six cases of explosives left behind by the Egyptian army, a find that was dealt with by the nearest army unit.

The pilgrims' inscriptions have been found mainly on the northern section of the route to Mt. Sinai, where the rock is soft, says Dr. Negev. No inscriptions have yet been found on the very hard rock of Ain Furtaga, another important watering place on the route which must have been frequented by the same pilgrims.

Among the members of Dr. Negev's expedition were Zvi Ben-Zvi and photographer Yitzhak Bar Yosef. Some of the inscriptions in Wadi Hagga, now being studied by Dr. Negev, were collected by Avner Ofer and Zeev Meshel, during an expedition on behalf of the Israel Nature Reserves Authority



A Jewish pilgrim who signed himself Shmuel Ben Hillel, asked to be "blessed and remembered" in this inscription.

## GRAFFITI

(Continued from page 3)

tean Greek, Hebrew, Armenian and Arabic. But on one stone, standing in isolation, there was Nabatean writing only. At its base were fragments of the beautiful painted Nabatean pottery known from other sites to have been manufactured in the first century C.E.

Explicit dating on the rocks stops with the Nabateans in the third century. Travellers may have sought shelter in the shade of these jutting stones subsequently, but only about 300 years later did any of them pick up a piece of stone or flint to scratch letters into the soft rock. These were the first Christian pilgrims to Mt. Sinai.

Dr. Negev says that only the powerful religious pull of "the Holy Mountain" could have induced travellers at that time to enter the forbidding desert waste. Struggling with intense heat by day, bitter cold at night, and no doubt occasional raids by Beduin marauders, the fearful pilgrims were more concerned with invoking heavenly protection than in recording historical data. Not one of the inscriptions so far found gives a date and few give the writer's place of origin.

Nevertheless, one clue has come in an inscription mentioning a woman called "Nonna" (nun, in Greek) a name known from two other sites. During World War One, a German team in Bessraheba uncovered a tombstone, since vanished, honouring the memory of Nonna, daughter of Aelios, architect of St. Catherine's Monastery on Mt. Sinai. At the monastery itself, a wooden beam is carved with the following dedicatory inscription: "O God, who sojourns at the place, help and redeem your servant Stefanos and the architect of this monastery Aelios and Nonna."

If this is the same woman referred to in Wadi Hagga, the rock inscription can be dated to the middle of the sixth century C.E. when the emperor Justinian built the monastery on Jebel Mussa. Strengthening the link between the desert travellers and the known historical personages at the monastery is the appearance of the name Stefanos. St. Catherine's first monk, who died in 530 C.E. and whose remains can be seen in a glass case at the monastery's home house. This name appears on the wadi rock, whose inscription reads:

"Bless, O Lord, your servant Theodore, and Kassia, and Auxon, and Nonna, and Stefanos, and John." John, Dr. Negev notes as yet an additional coincidence, was the name of the monk who succeeded Stefanos.

There was no Jewish tradition pinpointing the site of Mt. Sinai, the location of which is still the subject of scholarly controversy. For believers, however, the question was settled when Justinian built St. Catherine's on the highest peak in southern Sinai. This was a case where Jews came under the influence of Christian tradition and followed suit. Jewish inscriptions, also undated, have been found together with a menorah drawing in the Sinai ravine. They are now being studied by Dr. Beno Rothenberg, who surveyed the site shortly after the Six Day War at the head of the Arava expedition of Tel Aviv University.

Greek, which was used by the Jews of Palestine until at least the 7th century, is employed in some of the Jewish inscriptions, identified as Jewish by the absence of crosses and by such specifically Jewish formulas as "One God, the highest." (This invocation is signed by "Abraham, the son of Sarutha.") Another graffiti, in Hebrew, was written by "Shmuel, son of Hillel," who asks to be "blessed and remembered."

From a 12th century diary it is known that at least one Jew, Rabbi Jacob, son of Netanel, the Cohen, made a pilgrimage in the Middle Ages to Mt. Sinai where he found a "synagogue of the Israelites." He made the journey in 1187, but it is not known whether he started from Palestine or took the shorter and safer route from Egypt. In any case, says Dr. Negev, the evidence of Wadi Hagga indicates that the pilgrimage to the mount had been accepted by Jews.

# GOING UP TO JERUSALEM



The Three-Day March in the Judean Hills, held just before Pessah, is in the pilgrimage tradition.

"THREE times in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread (Pessah) and in the feast of weeks (Shavuot) and in the feast of tabernacles (Succot)." This is the Biblical prescription (Deut. 16:16) for which the rabbis coined the term "Appearance."

A lengthy responsum recently published by Rabbi Mordechai Hacohen, a leading Jerusalem halachic authority, deals with the question whether the commandment of appearance is binding today, when there is no Temple and no sacrifice.

The learned rabbi cites numerous sources to prove that a pilgrimage to the Holy City is just as much a part of the Jewish religion today as it was in the time of the Temple. He concludes, however, that the fulfillment of the religious "obligation" does not require three journeys a year. A Jew fulfills this mitzva even if he makes a pilgrimage once in a lifetime as long as that pilgrimage occurs during one of the three relevant festivals.

Rabbi Hacohen cites many instances of pilgrimages in fulfillment of a religious commandment undertaken throughout the centuries by thousands of Jews, among them some of the greatest rabbis. These pilgrimages, however, were very different both in scope and character from the "going up" to Jerusalem during the time of the Temple. The joy that had attended pilgrimages when the Temple was still in existence, changed to lamentation for the loss of the splendour that was and that could now be recaptured only in memory.

There are many allusions in the Bible to the extraordinary spirit of joy which prevailed at the pilgrimages during the period of the First Temple. More detailed descriptions were preserved of the pilgrimages to Jerusalem during the last decades of the Second Commonwealth. These are to be found in Mishnaic, Midrashic and Talmudic literature as well as in the writings of Philo of Alexandria, Josephus Flavius and their contemporaries.

The picture that emerges from these sources is one of magnitude and pageantry. From near and far, hundreds of thousands journeyed to Jerusalem for the festivals. The Roman governor Gaius Florus (64-66 C.E.) counted 250,000 paschal lambs at one Festival; Josephus allots ten persons to one lamb, which would make the number of pilgrims 2,500,000. The Tosefta (Pes. 5:84b) records the census of Agrippa, who ordered the priests to take a blind leg of every paschal lamb and counted in that year 2,000,000 legs, which makes the total 12,000,000.

These figures, even if they are grossly exaggerated, point to the tremendous number of Jews who would flock to Jerusalem from all over the Holy Land as well as from all corners of the Diaspora, in order to put in an appearance during the festival.

Such an ingathering was certainly not lacking in excitement and required quite an organization. The Mishna (Bikurim, Ch.3) gives us some details on the logistics of such a journey:

"The men of the smaller towns gathered together to the town of the Ma'amad (the regional centre) and spent the night in the open place of the town and came into the houses and early in the morning the officer (of the Ma'amad) said, 'Arise ye and let us go up to Zion, unto the Lord our God.' ... The flute was played before them until they drew nigh to Jerusalem. The rulers and prefects and the treasurers of the Temple went forth to meet them... and all the craftsmen in Jerusalem used to rise up before them and greet them, saying: 'Brethren, men of such-and-such place, you are welcome... The flute was played before them until they reached the Temple Mount... When they reached the Temple Court, the Levites sang the song, 'I will exalt thee, O Lord, for thou hast triumphed over me!'"

ON the other side of the Euphrates, tens of thousands of people from all over Babylon would convene in the city of Na'ardea and proceed from there en masse to Jerusalem (Josephus, "Antiquities" 18,9a). Philo ("On the Laws" Book A para. 64) tells of "tens of thousands from east and west, north and south who are en route to the Temple by land and sea."

The duty of appearance is legally incumbent only upon males, yet historical records from both the First and the Second Commonwealth prove that entire families would undertake the journey together. We also hear of women who went without their husbands (Talmud, Pes. 88a) or even against the will of their spouses (ibid. 94a).

The spectacle of so many thousands of Jews meeting each other, listening to the teachings of the sages of the Sanhedrin and looking at the sights of Jerusalem, the beautiful, an unforgettable experience. We can only wonder how the city coped with such a vast influx of tourists.

Historical evidence indicates that the authorities, as well as the population, were well organized to take care of the pilgrims, who brought of course an economic boom to the City. The money the pilgrims spent in Jerusalem did not flow into the pockets of luxury hotels. While the religious law required the pilgrim to sleep at least one night in Jerusalem (Sifra, 134) it did

*The pilgrimage up to Jerusalem (aliya l'regel) on the three festivals of Pessah, Shavuot and Succot is a commandment (mitzva) that was carried out by great throngs of Jewish pilgrims before the destruction of the Second Temple. Their numbers may have reached several millions, if one is to believe certain sources, writes Professor PINHAS PELI, who teaches Jewish thought and Jewish history at the Hebrew University and at Beersheba University.*

not allow of any charge whatsoever for his accommodation. In lieu of money, inkeepers were compensated with the hides of the sacrifices (Yoma 12a). The authorities employed special squads whose job was to make sure that the wells on the route leading to Jerusalem were cleaned and that roads were in good condition (Mishna Shkalim ch.1). Tens of thousands of tents were erected all around Jerusalem and Jewish communities abroad built special hostels in the city to accommodate their townsmen during their stay.

Notwithstanding all organization, planning and preparation, the task could not have been accomplished without a miracle to save the situation. Among the ten miracles that occurred to our forefathers, the Midrash (Abot d'Rabbi Nathan ch.2) includes the fact that "never did a man say, 'I did not find a bed on which to sleep in Jerusalem' nor did a man say: 'I felt crowded when I slept in Jerusalem.'"

That tourists should not complain about hard conditions, that they should not say, "I felt crowded" — this certainly borders on the miraculous.

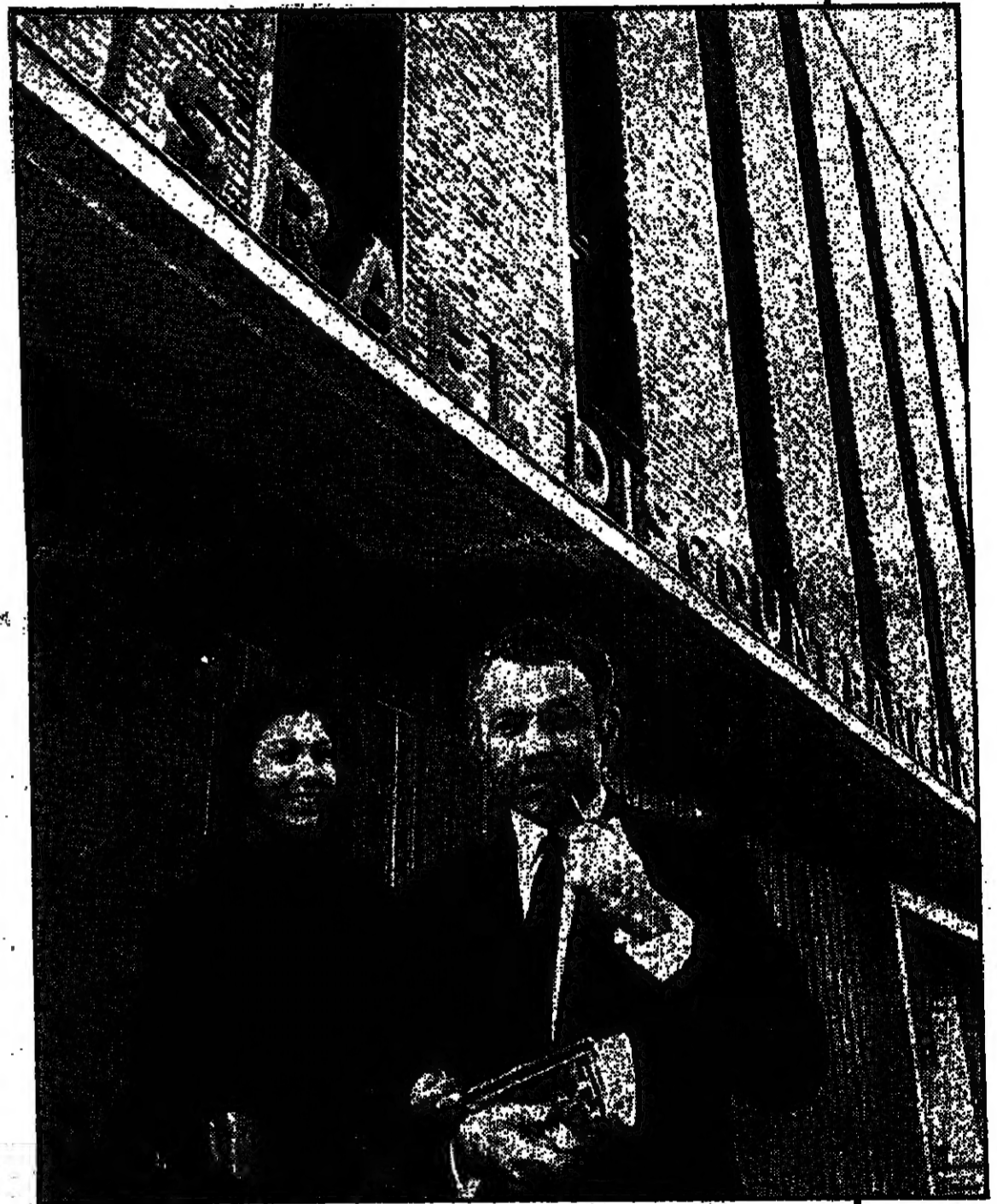
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# JERUSALEM Guide

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Y'al Advertising - P. Twenty - contains best wishes for a Happy Passover to all clients and friends.

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PESAH, especially with its focal point, the Seder service, is undoubtedly the most appealing of all the Jewish festivals. The joyous celebration of the release of the Israelites from Egyptian slavery is the real beginning of Jewish nationhood, with its reminder to every Jew in every age and every place that he himself, like his ancestors, must reach towards freedom from physical and spiritual bondage. Because of its personal appeal, and the cause of its national appeal, quite apart from scholarly exegetical, innumerable accounts have been written of the Seder, each interesting for its reflection of the individual's experience and emotional response.

In 419 B.C.E. the following letter was addressed by Hananiah (probably the Hananiah mentioned in the Book of Nehemiah as being in charge of Jerusalem's restoration after the Babylonian exile) to Jewish nlah, head of the Jewish garrison on Elephantine, guarding the Nile island frontier.

"...Now this year, the fifth year of the King Darius, word was sent from the King to Arsames (the Persian Governor of Egypt) saying: 'In the month of Tybi let there be a Passover for the Jewish garrison. Now do you accordingly count fourteen days of the month Nisan and keep the Passover, and from the 15th day to the 21st day of Nisan (shall be) seven days of unleavened bread. Be clean and take heed. Do not work on the 15th day and on the 21st day. Also drink no beer, and anything at all in which there is leaven do not eat from the 21st day of Nisan, seven days, let it not be seen among you; do not bring (it) into your dwelling, but seal (it) up during those days. Let this be done as Darius the King commanded.'

In 1864, the Rev. J.P. Newman, an English Methodist clergyman, published his book "From Dan to Beersheba, or The Land of Promise as It Now Appears." He speaks of the Jews of Jerusalem "numbering more than 7,700 souls" and finds that "as Jews in London and Paris, Rotterdam and Rome, Constantinople and Cairo, the Jewish Quarter is remarkable only for equidility, and the redolence of old clothes and second-hand wares in general."

Newman visited four Jewish households celebrating the Passover "which I was invited to witness by a Christian merchant of Jerusalem whose reputation among the Jews made him a welcome guest."

"Calling first on a family of moderate circumstances, we found them already seated around the table... In obedience to the command all the members of the household were present, including parents, sons and daughters, and daughters-in-law... Three lamps were burning on the table, and as many were suspended from the ceiling directly above... symbols of the Trinity... To represent the hasty departure of their fathers from Egypt, and in obedience to the paschal law, each person was attired as for a journey... The whole family recited portions of their history in concert. Alternately they were jubilant and indignant; when Moses triumphed they shouted; when Pharaoh was cruel they cursed him; and in their rage they dipped their finger in the wine and, allowing it to drop upon the floor, they enumerated therewith the plagues of Egypt, declaring Pharaoh should not

have a drop of wine to cool his parched tongue."

In the next apartment visited by Mr. Newman were a Jewess and a little girl with "three venerable Jews partaking of their annual feast with much good cheer. Contrary to expectation as well as to the law, they offered us a piece of unleavened bread... and a bit of herb, not unlike American lettuce, and exceedingly bitter to the taste. The three old Jews were advanced in years beyond the allotted time of human life... They conversed freely as to their national and religious condition, regarding themselves under the Turks as degraded and oppressed as their fathers were under the domination of Pharaoh. Yet they were not without hope; "Elias would soon come. Their land would be deli-

vered, and their ancient capital restored to its primal glory..."

The next station was the residence of a rich Jewish banker. Here they rapped at the courtyard gate, "but received the scriptural reply, 'I know you not.' From the street we could see the brilliantly-lighted room where the paschal feast was held - the elegantly-robed Jewesses, as they passed by the window - and heard the voices of joy and devotion within. The lateness of the hour, and the banker's fear lest the display of his plate and jewels might expose him to the rapacity of the Turk, were the probable causes of his refusal to admit us."

So the clergymen and his guides retraced their steps and came to a dwelling occupied by two families.

"In a small room there lived a poor but industrious Jew and his wife, whose inability to keep the Passover alone induced him to invite to his abode a widow and her two daughters. In the strange joining room lived the banker's clerk, who explained why his master did not receive us. Unwilling to allow a stranger to see the immense amount of gold and

silver in his possession, his cautiousness was the reason assigned for his seeming discourtesy, as his external poverty must be the safeguard of his valuable possessions. Restrained by no such fears, the clerk received us with great cordiality. His son and daughters, and all his grandchildren, had gathered beneath the parental roof and, forgetting Israel's ancient sorrows and present misfortunes, they gave themselves up to the freedom and unbounded joy of home. They laughed and talked, sang and shouted, ate and drank, as their emotions rose or appetite demanded."

However superficial his observation and understanding, Newman at least shows some personal sympathy. Not so Mrs. Sarah Barclay Johnson, whose book "Hadji in Syria, or Three Years in Jeru-

salem," published in Philadelphia in 1858, smells strongly of the ignorance, prejudice and presumption of so many of the pious snobs who went alighting in Jerusalem. She writes:

"The Passover is sadly changed. Instead of killing a lamb and observing the solemn ritual of the Bible, every family slaughters a chicken, which is eaten with salt, vinegar and herbs."

The shallowness of her understanding and the dishonesty of her reporting are demonstrated when she continues:

"Still more absurd, and at the same time painful and disgusting, is their manner of celebrating the feast of Purim, when every Jew, both young and old, male and female, is required to become so intoxicated as to be unable to distinguish between cursing Haman and blessing Mordecai. How deplorable is such a departure from the law of Moses, which indeed is now almost entirely discarded by them!"

VERY different in every way is Elizabeth Anne Finn, wife of the British Consul in Jerusalem who, with the acquiescence

of his Government, took the Jews of Palestine under his protection even though few of them could claim British nationality. In her "Reminiscences of Mrs. Finn" - published nine years after her death - in 1921, at the age of 96 - she does not describe the Passover, but tells of a case of the blood libel that has so often accompanied the festival.

"Early in 1847 a very serious business had occurred in Jerusalem, namely the blood accusation. A Greek lad threw a stone at a little Jewish boy in the street; wonderful to tell, the Jewish boy returned it (generally they ran away for safety) hit the other and wounded him on the ankle. There were many pilgrims in the city and immediately there was an uproar. The cry was that the Jews had endeavoured to pro-

ceeding to murder the boy, and the Council raised it up to their heads and submitted to it, and so the danger was averted after some most anxious days."

SELECTING at random from the vast literature we pick up "Traveled Roads," the memoirs of Moshe Aaron Schallt, published in New York in 1954 when he was 80 years old. He was brought to Palestine as a child by his father, who was one of the founders of Rishon le-Zion. After some time at the Mikve Yisrael agricultural school he studied medicine in Geneva and Paris, returning to Palestine in 1899. Finding no scope for a doctor in the tiny settlements of those days, he set up practice among the Arabs and Samaritans in Nablus. He had many patients but small profit. To demand fees from those able to pay, government officials and other notables, "I discovered was a breach of etiquette." Agitation against him stirred up by a politically powerful landowner and soap manufacturer, who sent him some crates of onions as "part payment" for the professional care of his family of four wives and 22 children, caused him to flee the town. He emigrated to Australia.

Dr. Schallt's book is particularly interesting for its vignettes of life in the primitive Palestine of only 80 years ago. Here is his description of the Seder at Mikve Yisrael:

"Our economist, M. Klots, was in charge. A couple of the older boys brought in wagonloads of vine prunings for the oven. Kosher flour was brought all the way from Jaffa. A representative of the Beth Din in Jerusalem arrived to supervise the baking of the matzoth... (Here follows a description of the home-baking.)

"Our Cantor, who was also our Hebrew Teacher, conducted the Seder, according to the Sephardic rite. In essentials this does not differ much from ours, the Ashkenazi. Yet, it all seemed strange to me. The chanting was different and so were the recitations. Both seemed tedious... The Cantor tried for a French rendition but he soon slipped into his native Baghdadian-Arabic sing-song. "The asking of the questions, a jolly feature of the ceremony at home, was here turned into a sort of exam. There was no joking theft of the afikomen here. (Continued on page 14)

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## STORIES OF THE SEDER

By S. BENARON



"The Passover Seder," engraving from Bernard Picart's "The History of the Religions of the Peoples of the World," Amsterdam, 1723. From the Michael Kaniel Collection, Jerusalem, photographed by David Harris.

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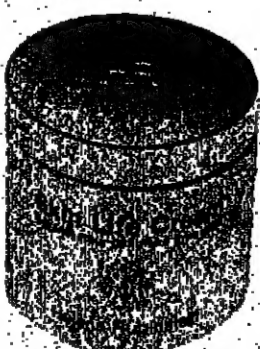
**Skin Life Honey Tonic:** A biological toning lotion.

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**This is being beautiful at 16: It's Helena Rubinstein's Bio-Clear**



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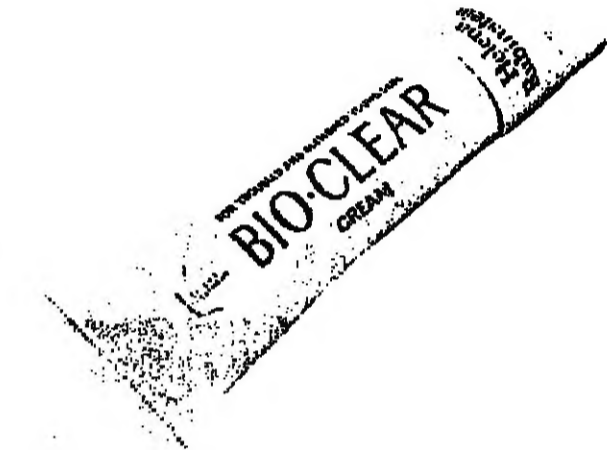
**Bio-Clear Mask:** speedy, effective facial mask which helps clear blackheads whiteheads and reduces oiliness.

**Bio-Clear Pore Lotion:** A stringent lotion.

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**Skin Balance Normalizing Gel:** A limpid refreshing gel that absorbs excess oiliness. To apply morning or evening.

**Skin Balance Normalizing Cleanser:** A normalizing, foaming cleanser.

**Skin Balance Normalizing Toner:** A freshening and toning lotion.

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**Helena Rubinstein—the name which stands in the first place in skin treatment and makeup. Popularity Poll 1972.**

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# SEDER

(Continued from page 11)

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## Petah Tikva seder

The following account of the first Seder celebrated in the first Jewish agricultural settlement in modern Palestine, Petah Tikva, is taken from the memoirs of Tuvia Salomon:

"The Pessah of 1879 was celebrated by Gutman, Shtamper and Raab and his children in the barn, from which all the fodder had been emptied... David Gutman, the oldest in our group, sat at the head of the table round which sat all his wife's children, whom he was bringing up, and the other members of the group with their families parents and children, little ones and adults..."

"He said, 'This night is Israel's night of remembrance for the signs and wonders that our God wrought for our fathers when they left Egypt... On this night we should pronounce the Shehehianu blessing with redoubled fervour: for his having kept us alive to set up the first agricultural settlement in our holy Land and to pave the road for those who will follow us. We here are the first birds heralding the dawn...'"

"Yehoshua Shtamper followed, saying, '... This festival is also to be called the Festival of Spring. But what sense of Spring did we have last year there in Jerusalem crowded up within the walls? What flower, what sign of Spring did we see there? The mouth mumbled the word 'Spring', but the heart asked 'Where, where is the Spring? Where is the freedom?' It is only here, in this place, that, thanks to our God, we feel the freedom and the Spring in their fulness, here on the land... We were only a few here. But out of our vision ten more came; and out of that vision a hundred will come; and the hundred will become a thousand; and the thousand will become ten thousand; and the ten thousand... millions...'"

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THERE was a Seder in a Nazi concentration camp. The Jews had no matza, only crusts of the bread that is forbidden to be eaten on Pessah. One of the prisoners awaiting death was a rabbi who uttered a prayer that is not to be found in any Hagadah: "Lord God, You have commanded us not to touch leavened bread on the Passover. Only matza may we eat. Why, God, do you prevent us from obeying your commandment?" It strikes a note of anguish and anger. Yet, because there is no despair in it, it is also perhaps a note of faith and hope.

PAGE FOURTEEN

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THE JERUSALEM POST MAGAZINE - PESSAH PILGRIMAGES

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29, 1977

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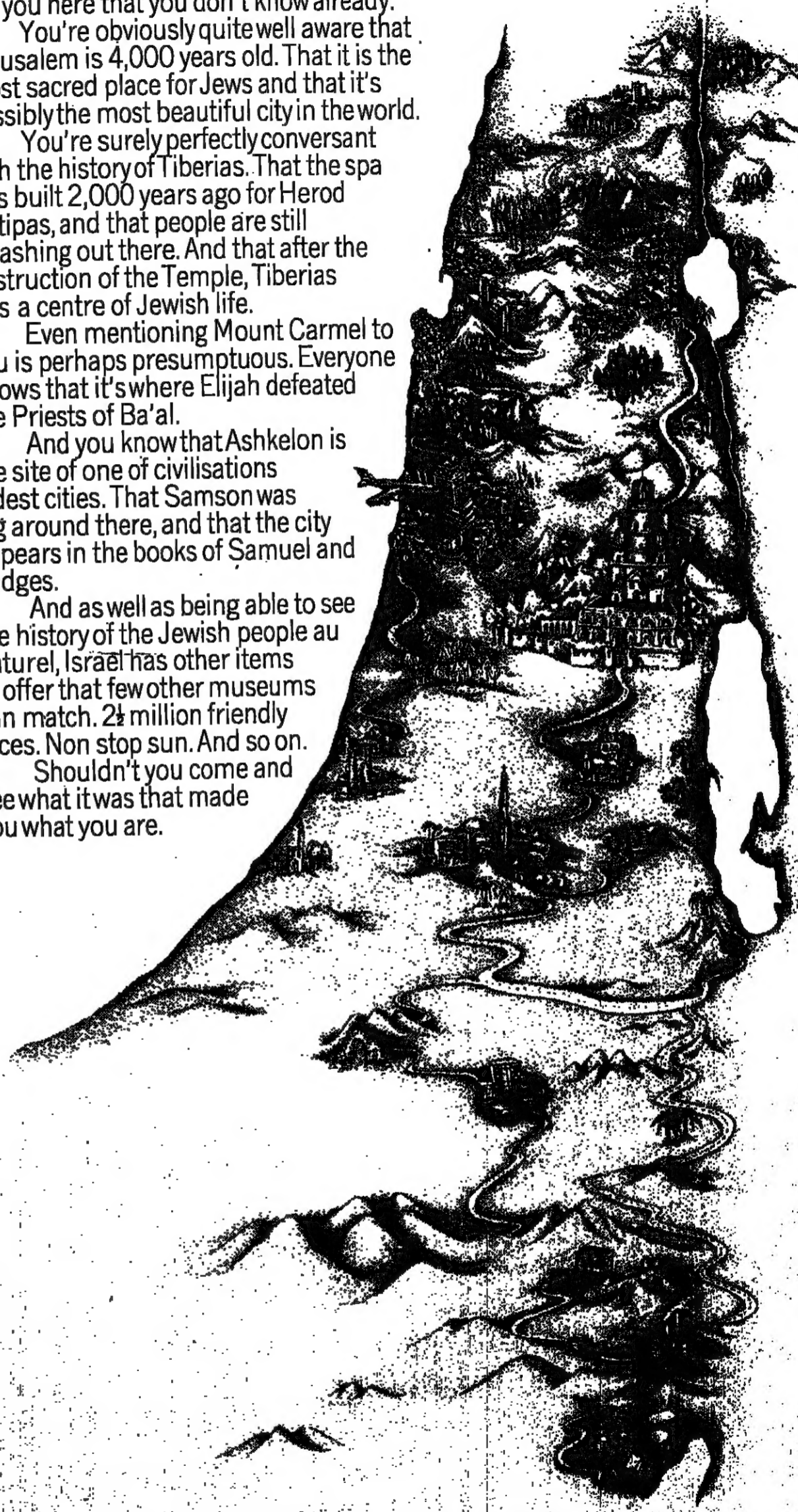
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MINISTRY OF TOURISM/PUBLICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS DIVISION

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29, 1977

THE JERUSALEM POST MAGAZINE - PESSAH PILGRIMAGES

PAGE FIFTEEN

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By  
SHOSHANA  
HALEVI

A BILU PESSAH



David Yudelevich

It was the wave of pogroms and persecution which swept over Russian Jewry in the spring of 1881, following the assassination of a liberal-hating Tsar, which resulted in the formation of BILU. Let the Jews leave his country, was the Tsar's response to the reports of violence. "The western borders are open to them." Many took him at his word — among them a group of students and young people who until that time had been far removed from all things Jewish and were passionate believers in Russian socialism. The pogroms and the Tsar's response to them opened their eyes to the great delusion under which they had lived and thought.

The leader of this group was Yisrael Belkind, who was preparing himself for entry to Kharkov University.

After furious arguments within the group, its members came to the conclusion that there was no future for the Jews among the Gentiles, and they all swore an oath "to try to return Israel to the Land of Israel, its true patrimony." Their manifesto "Belk Ya'acov, lehu ve'nalsha" (House of Jacob, Come Let Us Go) abbreviated into their name — BILU.

They moved quickly from words to action. On Tammuz 19, 5642 (1882) the first contingent of BILU members disembarked at Jaffa port, 13 young men and one girl. Within a short time others arrived, until their number topped 50.

Absorption pangs  
With neither a government nor a Histadrut to help them, they suffered the pangs of absorption in full measure. They worked in the fields of Mikve Yisrael and Zichron Ya'acov, back-breaking work for which they had neither training nor expertise. But the sensation of freedom, of being able to walk with head held high and to look any man in the eye, the feeling of not being strangers in someone else's country — this compensated for all the hardships.

Their greatest aspiration was to own their own holdings. Karl Netter, the founder of Mikve Yisrael, enthusiastically supported their efforts to achieve this, but with his sudden death in October, 1882, their hopes were dashed. Salvation came from another quarter. Yehiel Michel Pines, who had come to Jerusalem in 1878, persuaded them that working the land was not the only way of building up the yeshiva; industry, crafts and manufacturing were just as vital. His advice was that part of the group remain in Mikve Yisrael while the others go back with him to Jerusalem and learn various crafts and skills until land were found for all of them to settle on. Eight of the Bilurim took his advice.

David Yudelevich learned knife-grinding and Hillel Mints iron-work. Ozer Dov Lipshitz studied and lived at the Alliance School.

Ya'akov Mohilansky discarded the group's modern workaday clothes, donned a long kaftan and grew his peyot and entered the yeshiva of Rabbi Yehoshua Leib Diskin. This was Ben-Yehuda's idea. "We must prepare a suitable person to represent us both within (Jewry) and with the outside world. Our representative at present is the Haham Bashi... What a miserable representation for our People... We must, therefore, train a really great rabbi: great in Torah, great in secular knowledge, great in worldly affairs and great in political perception. In brief, a great Jew whom the title 'rabbi' will befit in his dealings with his fellow Jews and the epithet 'great' will befit in his dealings with the world outside." Mohilansky had been an itai — a prodigy — in the yeshivot in Russia, and so Ben-Yehuda chose him for this august destiny.

Dvora Syrut, the only girl in the group, went to live with the Ben-Yehudas, and helped Dvora Ben-Yehuda with the housework and with preparing meals for the other Bilurim, who all ate at the Ben-Yehuda home.

Belkind, Dubnow, Shertok, Rozovsky and Yudelevich clubbed together to rent a one room flat at the edge of Nahlat Shiva. Their total furniture comprised a table, two benches, a large reed mat, and a big pillow which Yudelevich's mother had given him when he left for Eretz Israel. All five contrived to share the pillow by sleeping on it each for a two-hour shift per night. As their skill in their newly acquired crafts improved and they earned some money, the five were able to rent a large eight-room apartment; each had a bedroom and three rooms were converted into workshops.

MEANWHILE, their first Pessah in Israel approached. Some of their friends at Mikve Ya'acov came up to Jerusalem for

the festival and there were 20 young Bilurim seated for the seder in Ben-Yehuda's home. David Yudelevich recalls the atmosphere of that night: "On the eve of the festival, as all these fine young men filed into Pines' Beit Midrash, with Ben-Yehuda at their head, the room was filled with the radiance of youth. Pines' heart throbbed with joy... From the *beit midrash* we went to Ben-Yehuda's house. And the house was full of light — the light of Dvora our mother. And how the face of our teacher Ben-Yehuda shone with light!..."

'Eretz, eretz, eretz'

"We sat and talked about the Exodus from Egypt. And after the meal we all went out of Nahlat Shiv'a into the wide Rehov Yaffo with a song, a Hebrew song, on our lips. From the mouths of 20 young men the song cleft the night air: "Hurry brothers, hurry," the song which Pines had composed for us. Our spirits soared, our hearts and souls leapt. A fire seized Boro-

chovitz, he flung his hat into the air crying 'Eretz, eretz, eretz!' For 2,000 years your ears haven't heard the sound of living Hebrew. And now we have come back to you, to revive you and love your soil. We swear it! And he threw himself on the ground and kissed the holy earth roaring and crying 'Eretz, eretz, eretz!' And the mountains of Judea trembled and echoed his cry: 'Eretz, eretz, eretz!'"

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Left: Seder scene, featuring the 'Four Sons,' from the Offenbach Haggada, 1790. Above, two pages from the Livorno Haggada of the 19th century; Right, frontispiece from the Amsterdam Haggada, with copper-plate engravings by Avraham Bar-Ya'acov, Amsterdam, 1712. All from the Michael Kaniel Collection, photographed by David Harris.

# The most illustrated of Jewish books

THE Passover Haggada is more than just a story-book of the Exodus. While it contains a description of the bondage in Egypt, the Ten Plagues and the Exodus, it is essentially a religious service of thanksgiving. Known as "The Book of Liberation" or "The Book of the Redemption," the Haggada is a volume of both reminiscences and hopeful expectations, containing, as it does, expressions of yearning for the ingathering of the dispersed of Israel to Zion, which ends with the dramatic and rousing cry — Next Year in Jerusalem!

The essentials of the Haggada text are more than 2,200 years old, having been compiled by the members of the Sanhedrin, mainly from passages from the Bible. Additions were made by Tanaitic sages of the Talmud during the following four hundred years, and by the Amoraitic period (about the third century C.E.) the Haggada was almost complete. Some final Seder songs were added in the Geonic period, during the ninth and tenth centuries.

The oldest existing version of the Haggada is that of Saadiah Gaon, which appears in his Siddur dating back to the tenth century. Other ancient versions of the Haggada are those of the Mahzor Vitry (11th century) and that of

Maimonides, as it appears in the *Mishneh Torah* (12th century). The Haggada rapidly became one of the most beloved of Jewish books, edited, translated and commented upon more than any other of its type. Since the first Haggada to be printed as a separate book was published in Guadalajara, Spain, in 1492, more than 3,100 editions have appeared, coming from almost every Jewish community large enough to have a Hebrew printing press.

**Dozens of translations**

The Haggada has been translated into dozens of languages and dialects. Notable among the latter are Yiddish and Ladino; Judaeo-Arabic, Judaeo-Persian, Judaeo-Italian, and Judaeo-Greek. The translations were usually published together with the Hebrew text. Hundreds of rabbis and scholars have written commentaries on the Haggada. Publishers vied with each other to produce editions containing more and more commentaries, one of them finally achieving the staggering figure of 238.

The Haggada is the most illustrated of all Jewish books. Since its very origin, care was taken to bring the Passover story to the consciousness of the young, fulfilling the Biblical injunction:

"And thou shall tell thy son..." (Exodus 13:8) — it is easy to see why it became a favourite vehicle for Jewish artists, illuminators and engravers.

Jewish artists and scribes who may have practiced iconographic self-restraint with sacred synagogue books, felt no such compunction about the Haggada and felt free to give full rein to their talents when the Haggada was separated from the synagogue prayer-book around the 13th century.

Since the Haggada was a relatively small book, it was not a major expense for a man of some means to commission an artist to illustrate and decorate a manuscript copy which would not only hold the attention of the children during the lengthy Seder service, but also add a beautiful Jewish ceremonial book to his collection.

**Sephardi school**

Illustrated Haggadot were produced in several European countries in medieval times, but the two main schools of illustrators were the Sephardi school in 13th and 14th-century Spain, and the Ashkenazi school in Southern Germany, during the 14th and 15th centuries.

Among the finest examples of the dozen or so medieval Spanish Haggadot extant, are the 14th-century "Sarajevo," "Kaufmann" and "Golden" Haggadot, all of which have been reproduced in recent years. Probably the most important of these and the best-known of all illuminated manuscripts, is the first, now in the State Museum at Sarajevo, Yugoslavia.

A distinguishing feature of most medieval Sephardi Haggadot is a series of Biblical illustrations preceding the Hebrew text. In the "Sarajevo Haggada," there are no fewer than 89 illustrations, filling 34 pages. These miniatures, which begin with the creation and end with Moses' final blessing of the children of Israel, bear a striking resemblance to Latin Bible illuminations produced contemporaneously in Spain. But the illuminator's scrupulous abstention from anthropomorphic representations of the Divinity, and his intimate knowledge of Midrashic sources, and Jewish customs, indicate clearly that he was a Jew. He may, indeed, have been the scribe as well.

The "Kaufmann Haggada" is also prefaced by Biblical miniatures, but 12 full-page illuminations, distributed throughout the book, are confined to Exodus. Here again, one can safely conjecture that the artist was a Jew.



The Haggada, which is read at the Seder table tonight, is often richly decorated. MICHAEL KANIEL, a Jerusalem expert on Jewish ceremonial art, tells the story of some of them, from the famous 'Golden Haggada' of the 14th-century Germany to the 20th century Haggadot illustrated by contemporary artists.

## Haggada

(Continued from previous page)

include the 15th-century "Darmstadt Haggada" and the "Bird's Head Haggada" of about 1300.

While avoiding many of the usual textual illustrations common to earlier and contemporary Haggadot, the "Darmstadt Haggada" is outstanding for its large and distinctive initial letters, and its rich border designs. Particularly entertaining are the whimsical miniatures of individuals reading the Haggada, delivering dissertations or participating in discussions on it.

One of the most intriguing of all decorated manuscript Haggadot is the so-called "Bird's Head Haggada," now in the Israel National Museum in Jerusalem. While human figures abound in both the Sephardi and Ashkenazi Haggadot, it is in illuminated Ashkenazi manuscripts of the late 13th and 14th centuries that we find the strange phenomenon of the substitution of the heads of birds or animals for human heads.

A reasonable explanation would appear to be that the illuminators were guided by a contemporary Halachic interpretation of the Second Commandment, permitting the depiction of human beings in Jewish religious books as long as they were incomplete. Instead of painting headless figures, artists substituted heads of birds or of animals which was apparently acceptable to the Halachic authorities of the time.

**The hare hunt**

A common illustration in medieval Haggadot is the *Yakhshas*, the hare hunt. *Yakhshas* is a mnemonic for remembering the order of the blessings during the Kiddush ceremony for a festival occurring on Saturday night, when a *Havdala* ceremony is also required. The word represents the initial letters of the words *yayin* (wine), *Kiddush* (sanctification), *Ner Havdala* (candle), *Havdala* (separation) — between the holiness of the Sabbath and the holiness of the festival, and *Zman* (time — i.e., the blessing for the festival).

The punning use of the hare hunt (in German *Yag-den-has*) as a Haggada illustration was the artist's subtle method of expressing the constant pursuit of Israel by her enemies. Sometimes the hare was replaced by a stag, and there are pictures of the stag reaching water, an eschatological depiction of a peaceful Israel finally reaching its own land in Messianic times.

The tradition of *Yakhshas* illustrations was to continue into the printed Haggada.

Eschatology was an essential element in these medieval Haggadot. A common illustration was Elijah blowing the great *shofar* to announce the coming of the Messiah. But one of the most popular subjects was — and remains — the Messiah himself riding into Jerusalem on his donkey.

**Scribes' artwork**

Little is known about the illuminators of these medieval German Haggadot, but it is thought that most of them were illuminated by the scribes themselves. One leading Jewish illustrator to whom several Haggadot have been attributed is Joel ben Simon (also called Feibush Ashkenazi), who flourished for a while in either Bonn or Cologne in the 15th century, and moved to northern Italy in about 1450.

It is not certain exactly when the first illustrated printed Haggada appeared, but the earliest we know of was printed in Spain or Portugal, or more probably, in Constantinople or Salonica, sometime between 1504 and 1516. Only fragments of this Haggada exist

— both the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York and Cambridge University have some — but these are sufficient to indicate that it was illustrated in the lavish style typical of the Sephardi Haggadot of the 13th and 14th centuries.

It is the "Prague Haggada" of 1526, the first complete illustrated printed one extant, which has had the greatest influence on Haggadah illustration in the past four centuries. The "Prague Haggada" is indeed a beautiful book, with fine lettering and bold ornamental initial letters and attractive woodcuts and decorative vignette illustrations, all capped with three fully-decorated pages with magnificent borders, executed in bold Gothic style. With considerable justification it has been termed "one of the finest productions of the 16th-century printing press in any language." Published by the brothers Gershom and Gronam Cohen, it was illustrated by Haim Shabor-Schwartz.

Haggadot have been produced by leading illustrators such as Jacob Steinhardt, Joseph Budko, Arthur Szyk, Albert Rothstein, Saul Raskin and Ben Shahn.

In a commentary on the illuminated medieval Haggada which could well apply to the illustrated Haggada in general, Bruno Toller, in his work on the "Darmstadt Haggada" writes: "There is more to be got from looking at the illustrations of the Haggada than aesthetic enjoyment and a valuable insight into the history of the culture. Every picture reveals part of the soul of the medieval Jew, who, in the face of external oppression, preserved an unaffected serenity of spirit, which had its origin in a deep and, above all, a domestic religious sentiment. Thus it is also the Jewish religion which receives its faithful illumination from these illustrations..."

**Venetian milestone**

In 1609 a milestone was reached with the publication of the "Venice Haggada," by Israel Zifron. This featured an engraved architectural border around every page and introduced a series of vignette illustrations of preparations for the Seder, with all the participants in contemporary dress. Various of these grouped vignette illustrations were to become standard at the beginning of many illustrated Haggadot which were to appear in the years to come.

The next great milestone was the publication in 1695 of the "Amsterdam Haggada," with a completely new series of illustrations. This was the first Hebrew book in which copperplate engravings rather than woodcuts were used. They were executed by Abraham ben Jacob, a proselyte. In 1712 a new edition appeared, with additional original illustrations and other improvements, and became the prototype for many of the Ashkenazi Haggadot published over the next two and a half centuries.

A major innovation by Abraham ben Jacob was his insertion of a map of the Land of Israel, the oldest extant map of the country in Hebrew. Its insertion at the back of the Haggada, adjoining the "next year in Jerusalem" conclusion, graphically reflected Jewish yearning for the ultimate redemption and the return to their own land.

**18th century revival**

In the 18th century, a revival of the practice of Hebrew manuscript illumination in Central Europe, mostly in Germany, Bohemia and Moravia, resulted in the production of a number of attractive illuminated Haggadot. With some rare exceptions, most of their illustrations were copies of the "Amsterdam Haggada." Notable miniaturists during this period were Moses Leib ben Wolf of Trebitsch, Aron Wolf of Gewsitz, Nathan ben Samson of Meseritz, Joseph Pinhas of Ansbach, Yitzro Phoebus ben Isaac Segal of Hamburg, and the Moravian-born Joseph ben David Leipnik of Hamburg-Altona-Wandsbeck.

Some of Leipzig's Haggadot display artistic talent of the first order, with illuminations which are original gems of 18th-century Jewish art but occasionally they are prosaic, poorly executed copies of earlier illustrations.

In the 20th century, artistic

— both the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York and Cambridge University have some — but these are sufficient to indicate that it was illustrated in the lavish style typical of the Sephardi Haggadot of the 13th and 14th centuries.

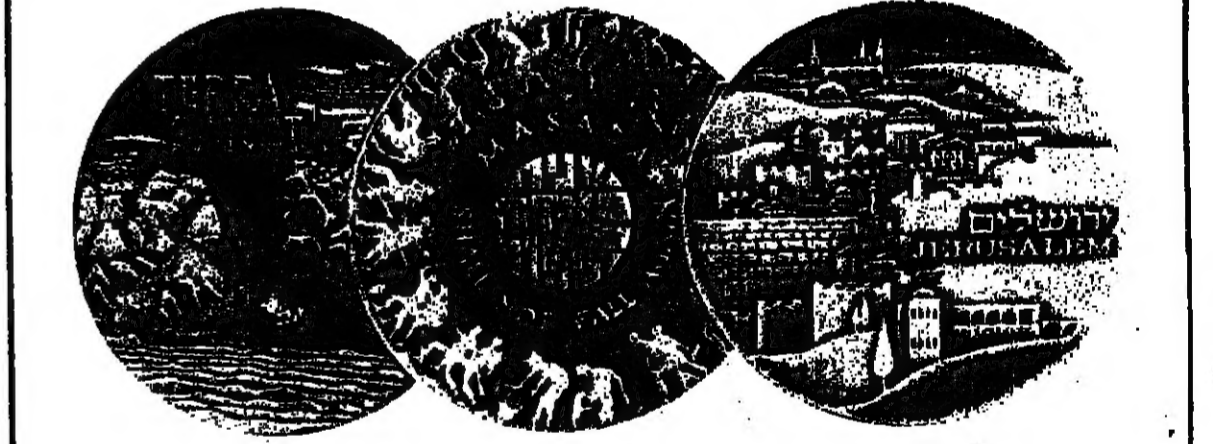
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Seder tray, pewter, featuring words 'Pessah, matza, maror' on the rim and seder scene in the centre. (From Michael Kaniel Collection, photo by David Harris)



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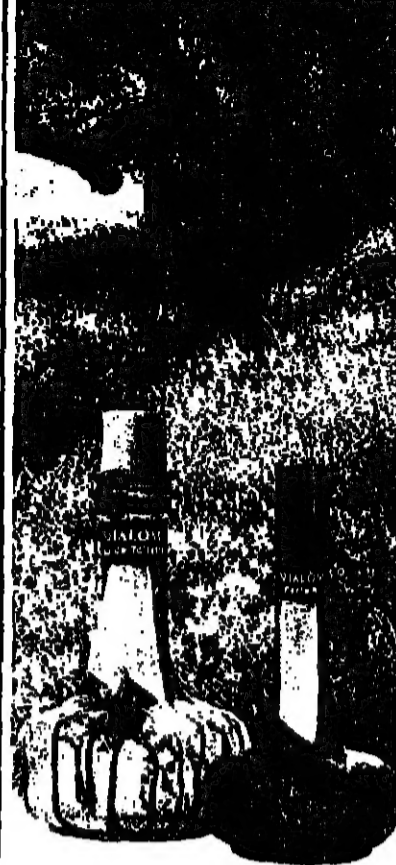
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By the Grace of G-d  
5th Day of the Week  
Rosh Chodesh Nissan, 5732  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Greeting and Blessing:

Pesach, the first and "head" of all our festivals, occupies a central place in Jewish life. The content of this festival: the liberation and selection of the Jewish people, in order to become a Tora-people; the manner in which the liberation was effected through obvious miracles, which confirmed clearly and obviously that G-d is not only the Creator of the world, but also its Master, and that Divine Providence reaches all parts and details of all the created universe — this is indeed "the great foundation and solid pillar of our Tora and our faith." Therefore, we recount the subject of Yetziat Mitzraim (the Exodus from Egypt) in our prayers every day, and several times a day, in order that these fundamental principles of our faith should illuminate and permeate our daily life.

It is understandable, therefore, why the festival of Pesach, in all its details, brings out basic features which are identified with Jews, Tora and Yiddishkeit, and which serve as fundamental teachings in the daily life of the Jewish people as a whole and of the individual Jew.

\* \* \*

Tora, Jews, and Yiddishkeit in general, as has often been discussed before, are not separate things, in that a Jew commits himself to Tora from time to time, or at certain times, and lives accordingly; but they are all one thing. In other words: in every detail of his being, both in regard to his body and his soul, as well as in all details of his daily life, a Jew must be permeated with Tora and Yiddishkeit.

One aspect of this concept is: just as the Tora embraces the whole world, and as our Sages of Blessed Memory expressed it, namely, that the Tora is the Divine "blueprint" of the whole creation with all its particulars, so also a Jew, even as an individual, through his Tora-true Jewish living, has an impact on the whole world. This means that a Jew must endeavour, and can indeed do and accomplish much, to the end that not only he himself, but also the world at large should attain perfection. This he accomplishes both directly and indirectly — through a full and all-embracing Tora-life, thereby showing a living example of what should be a man's conduct in daily life, thus eventually becoming a "light of the nations" to illumine and guide the life-path of all the nations of the world.

Realizing how much his personal conduct in the daily life affects his own perfection, and that of his family, and of the whole Jewish people, and ultimately that of the whole world, it gives him special courage and powers to overcome all difficulties. For, of what significance can one's difficulties be in comparison with accomplishment of such scope and magnitude?

\* \* \*

If, in various periods in the past, one had to look for, and discover, the specific attribute of a Jew as "light of the nations," it had to be openly and clearly brought out in the time of the "birth" and beginning of the Jewish people — "when Israel came out of Egypt," in a manner which should reach all nations, and in a matter which encompasses their whole life.

At that time, Jews were completely surrounded, swallowed up as it were, by the non-Jewish world, and as the Tora declares: "To take out a nation from the 'inside' of a nation," from the midst of a mighty nation engulfing all nations.

Then came the first Divine commandment, addressed to the whole Jewish people, and to each individual, at the very beginning of the month of Geulah Rosh Chodesh Nissan: "Withdraw (from idolatry) and take unto you a lamb for your families and offer the Passover (sacrifice)."

The commandment was to take a lamb which was the idol of Egypt, where idolatry was the basis of the whole way of life, as in the whole world, and to abolish this idolatry.

This was to be done openly and demonstratively so that everybody should know and ask questions about it; and the Jews did explain what it was all about.

In this way it was also impressed upon the Jews, and through them (as the "light of the nations") upon all the nations, that true Geulah liberation from physical enslavement, is dependent upon liberation from spiritual enslavement.

\* \* \*

Reflecting deeply on the content of the festival of Pesach, each year with the arrival of the days of preparation for Pesach, and especially during the days of Pesach itself, which "you shall celebrate as an everlasting ordinance, seven days," an observance lasting through all the seven days of the week, thus embracing the total life of a Jew in every situation in which he finds himself —

It refreshes and intensifies all the details of Yetziat Mitzraim which a Jew has to realize in actual life. The gist of it is:

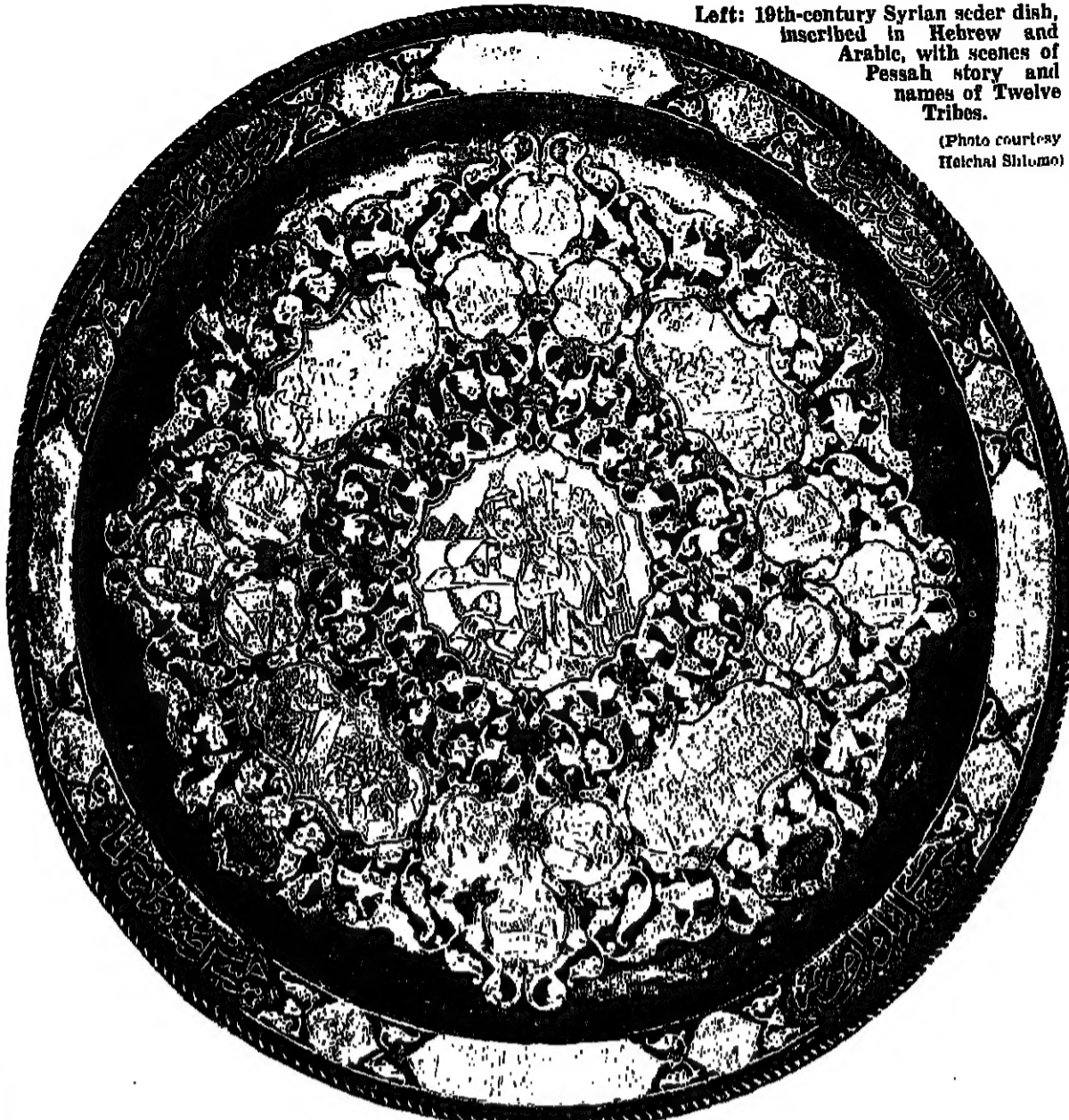
Withdraw, which — in the vein of "turn away from evil" — means: To reject each and every idolatry, particularly the one that is dominant in one's time and place.

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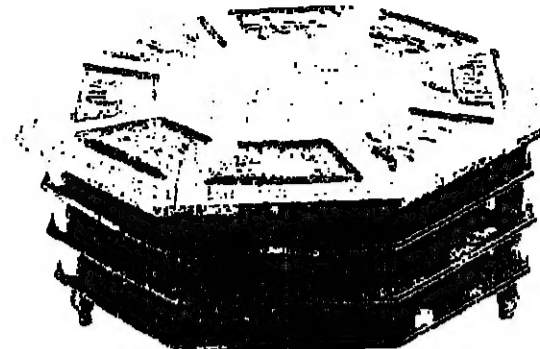
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When "G-d will shine forth on you, and His glory on you will be seen." And in fulfillment of the prayer of David, King of Israel, the "Sweetener of the Songs of Israel," uttered in behalf of all Jews and every Jew: "O, G-d, make haste to deliver me — to help me, make haste, O G-d." With the coming of our Mashiach very soon indeed.

With blessing for a Kosher and Joyous Pesach,  
(Signed) **MENACHEM SCHNEERSON**  
(Presented by Agudat Haasafel Habad)



Left: 19th-century Syrian seder dish, inscribed in Hebrew and Arabic, with scenes of Pesach story and names of Twelve Tribes.  
(Photo courtesy Heichal Shalom)



Wooden seder tray, featuring eight carvings of Holy Land sites and words matzot in centre. The three shelves are for the three matzot used in the seder service. Jerusalem, 1985.  
(Michael Kaniel collection)



17th-century Ivory seder goblet, from southern Germany, bears legend "Shiah et Ami" (Let My People Go). On bottom, it is signed in Hebrew, "The work of Yosef Ben Yitzhak." (Photo-courtesy Heichal Shalom)



"Baking the Matzot," engraving in "Sefer Hamishagim," Amsterdam, 1768.  
(Michael Kaniel collection)



Chopper from Eastern Europe, 18th century, used in making horoset.  
(Michael Kaniel collection)



"The Search for Hametz," pre-Pesach housecleaning. Engraving from Bernard Picart's "The History of the Religions of the Peoples of the World." Amsterdam, 1725.  
(Michael Kaniel collection)

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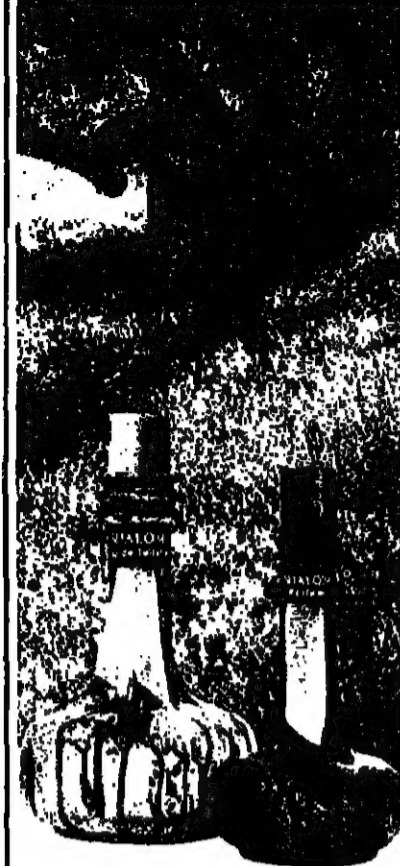


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To the Sons and Daughters of Our People Israel, Everywhere  
G-d bless you all!

By the Grace of G-d  
5th Day of the Week  
Rosh Chodesh Nissan, 5782  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Greeting and Blessing:

Pesach, the first and "head" of all our festivals, occupies a central place in Jewish life. The content of this festival: the liberation and selection of the Jewish people, in order to become a Tora-people; the manner in which the liberation was effected through obvious miracles, which confirmed clearly and obviously that G-d is not only the Creator of the world, but also its "Master," and that Divine Providence reaches all parts and details of all the created universe — this is indeed "the great foundation and solid pillar of our Tora and our faith." Therefore, we recount the subject of Yetziat Mitzraim (the Exodus from Egypt) in our prayers every day, and several times a day, in order that these fundamental principles of our faith should illuminate and permeate our daily life.

It is understandable, therefore, why the festival of Pesach, in all its details, brings out basic features which are identified with Jews, Tora and Yiddishkeit, and which serve as fundamental teachings in the daily life of the Jewish people as a whole and of the individual Jew.

\* \* \*

Tora, Jews, and Yiddishkeit in general, as has often been discussed before, are not separate things, in that a Jew commits himself to Tora from time to time, or at certain times, and lives accordingly; but they are all one thing. In other words: in every detail of his being, both in regard to his body and his soul, as well as in all details of his daily life, a Jew must be permeated with Tora and Yiddishkeit.

One aspect of this concept is: just as the Tora embraces the whole world, and as our Sages of Blessed Memory expressed it, namely, that the Tora is the Divine "blueprint" of the whole creation with all its particulars, so also a Jew, even as an individual, through his Tora-true Jewish living, has an impact on the whole world. This means that a Jew must endeavour, and can indeed do and accomplish much, to the end that not only he himself, but also the world at large should attain perfection. This he accomplishes both directly and indirectly — through a full and all-embracing Tora-life, thereby showing a living example of what should be a man's conduct in daily life, thus eventually becoming a "light of the nations" to illumine and guide the life-path of all the nations of the world.

Realizing how much his personal conduct in the daily life affects his own perfection, and that of his family, and of the whole Jewish people, and ultimately that of the whole world, it gives him special courage and powers to overcome all difficulties. For, of what significance can one's difficulties be in comparison with accomplishment of such scope and magnitude?

\* \* \*

If, in various periods in the past, one had to look for, and discover, the specific attribute of a Jew as "light of the nations," it had to be openly and clearly brought out in the time of the "birth" and beginning of the Jewish people — "when Israel came out of Egypt," in a manner which should reach all nations, and in a manner which encompasses their whole life.

At that time, Jews were completely surrounded, swallowed up as it were, by the non-Jewish world, and as the Tora declares: "To take out a nation from the 'inside' of a nation," from the midst of a mighty nation engulfing all nations.

Then came the first Divine commandment, addressed to the whole Jewish people, and to each individual, at the very beginning of the month of Geulah Rosh Chodesh Nissan: "Withdraw (from idolatry) and take unto you a lamb for your families and offer the Passover (sacrifice)."

The commandment was to take a lamb which was the idol of Egypt, where idolatry was the basis of the whole way of life, as in the whole world, and to abolish this idolatry.

This was to be done openly and demonstratively so that everybody should know and ask questions about it; and the Jews did explain what it was all about.

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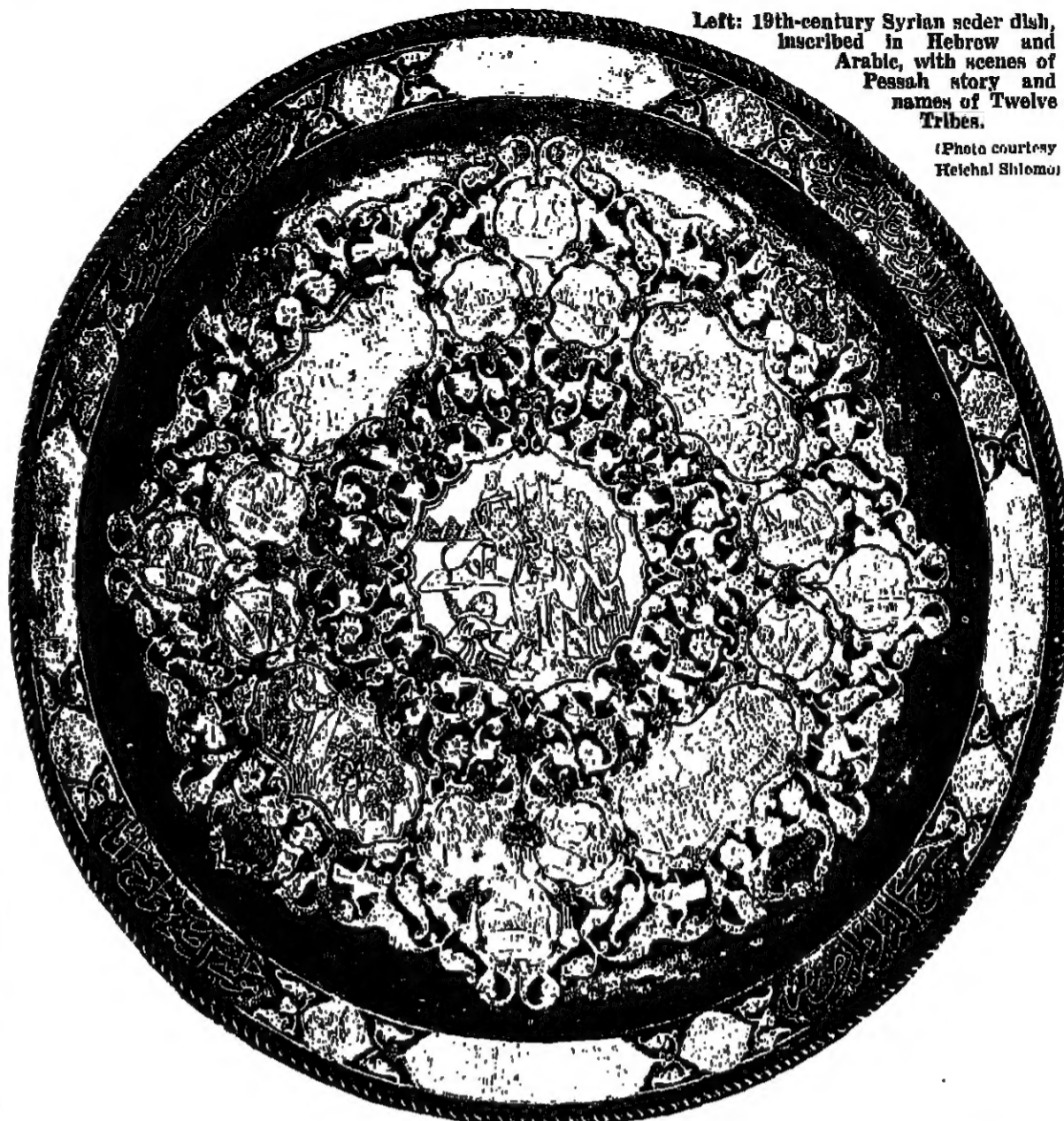
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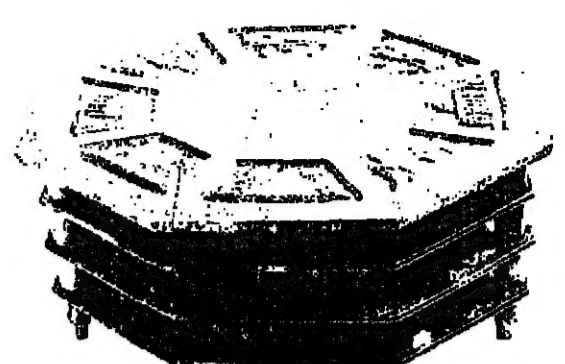
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"Baking the Matzot," engraving in "Sefer Haminhagim," Amsterdam, 1768. (Michael Kanief collection)



"The Speech of the Secretary," engraving in "Sefer Haminhagim," Amsterdam, 1768. (Michael Kanief collection)